FROM THS ACID-MIND OF

THB GREAT WHITE

BIRD
COMES

THE FIRST ANNUAL

NEWSLETTER
&
GENERAL BS SHEET

of the

SOUTHWEST TEXAS GROTTO

of the

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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This newsletter is published under the auspices of no one who could be called responsible.

The major purpose of this, our first newsletter, is to familiarize you new members with the purposes, aims, and orginization of the club and to refresh the memory of some of our old members.

Requirement s for membership

Payment of dues

This entitles you tos

1. Use club carbide
2. Go on club trips

Requirements for qualified membership

Payment of dues

Demonstrate that you are proficient in the following;

1. Rappel
2. Prissik using knots rather than mechanical ascenders

3» Familiarity with the following knots;

(a) Bowline
(b) Half hitch
(c) Clove hitch
(d) Timber hitch
(e) Prussik knot
(f) BBS
(g) Figure eight

Go on not less than two day and two night trips in the presence of a qualified member.

Must have been a regular member of the club for at least one full semester

Be voted.qualified by a simple majority of the total qualified members of the club.

Privaliges of qualified members

1. Use of club equipment
   (a) Carbide
   (b) Various lengths of Goldline, white nylon, and Samson Braided 2 in 1
   (c) Brunton pocket transit, adaptor, and tripod
   (d) Ono hundred foot steel tape
   (e) Leroy lettering set
   (f) Various publications

This equipment may be checked out by a qualified member from our equipment chairman, Joe Sumbera, and must be returned to him clean and in good condition. Failure to do this can result in the loss of qualified privaliges.

2. Qualified members will have the right to vote on club business and in the qualifing of new members.

Saftey rules

1. Never enter a cave alone
2. Always have at least three sources of light
3. Always wear a hard hat
4. Always leave word when entering a cave and your expected time of return
5. Do not use rope unless you know how to use it
6. Know how to contact the nearest cave rescue unit

Editorial

SAVE CONSERVATION

This seems to me to be an excellent time for me to air my hostilities against the all too large segment of the speleo-ignorant American public who through their ignorance and/or total disregard for cave conservation have caused the closing of entirely too many of our caves. Have you ever computed the percentage of the caves you've done that have in some way been desicrated by previous people? Have you ever been refused enterance to a cave because of what other people have done? I shall list a few basic rules for cave conservation and the results when some of them were not followed.

1. Always ask permission to enter the cave.
Usually landowners are quite friendly toward cavers and their right and desire to know who is on their land should be respected. Steam cave, for one, is now virtually closed due to trespassing cavers.

2. Don't deface the cave, break cave formations, or collect pre- viously broken formations.
Many times when entering a cave one notices an abundance of small arrows smoked on the walls. These were placed hero with purpose, that being to keep the caver from getting lost* However, they do deface the cave. I have found that the best way to mark trails is to smoke an arrow on a rock which can be turned over when exit- ing and thus in no way deface the cave. Sometimes, such as in the case of surveying, a small mark is necessary for a permanent station. The use of those should be as limited as possible. On our club trip to Gorman Falls you will see the result of thought- loss people leaving thoir names on the walls as a sigh to all followers of thoir prownoss as cave explorers. Also, our Texas caves are now protected by House Bill #1111 which makes it unlaw- ful! to break, disturb, or marr a natural cave formation. This is punishable by up to a $5^0 fino and/or up to six months in the can. The removal of previously broken formations cannot be just- ified since this practice may oauso others to enter the cave with the- purpose of collecting formations, broken or otherwise.

3. Don't harass cavo fauna. Cave inhabitants, especially trog— lobites, are usually very delicate creatures who through time have become acclimated to their limited enviornmont. Any change in this onviornmont can quite easily upsot the entire balance of the fauna. Bits of trash thoughtlessly loft behind or even buried can increase the food supply of said creatures and thus change their onviornmont. Spent carbide should always be removed from the cavo since if it is simply left or buried ground water circ- ulation can distrubiite it throughout the entire cavo. This can bo fatal to the oaves fauna, not to mention a caver drinking from a pool near tho carbide. At times tho collecting of cave fauna for biological purposes is justified but should be done as limited and as consientiously as is possible.

4* Don't give cavo loads to the general public. Recently several high school students entered Coffin cave in Williamson county. After desending the 49' enterance drop they found that their plan for climbing hand over hand was totally inadequate. Fortunately the landowner know that they were in the cavo and he promptly rescued them. The result of this incident was, however, a closed cave. Which at this time is the deepest surveyed pit in Williamson county. As far as I'm concerned the least said about cave lo- cations, the better. Simply stating the geological survey quadrangle

[bottom line cut off]

5. Go out of your way to be considerate of landowners. A cave map costs a thin dime if it can be xeroxed and probably never more than two dollars for an oslide print and can prove to be of much value to the landowner. Not to mention the value of caveor landowner relationships.

In conclusion, I'm sure you have all heard the NSS motto "Take nothing but pictures, leace nothing but footsteps." Hopefully, SWT cavers can broaden this to take nothing but pictures and thoughtlessly left trash, leave nothing but carefully placed footsteps and good, landowner relations.

THIS IS YOUR CLUB NEWSLETTER* SUPPORT IT WITH TRIP REPORTS, CARTOONS, JOKES, AND ANYTHING RELATED TO THE SCIENCE OF SPELEOLOGE. WITHOUT YOUR HELP I'LL SOON RUN OUT OF RHETORIC AND HAVE NOTHING TO PRINT.

BP

OBSERVED KARST FEATURES OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA, SAN LUIS POTOSI, MEXICO , AND THE APPARENT ORIGIN OF S(5TANO DE PUERTO DE LOS LOBOS.

by Joe P. Sumbera

Thirty miles east of S.L.P. nt about 7,000 ft. elevation is a hifeh karst area around the small town of San Francisco. The area lies on the western edge of the Sierra Madro Oriental just before the mountains relief out as the high, level Central Plateau, and this area runs an undetermined distance NW-SE of San Francisco. From general observations, the area has undergone extensive solutions^ modification present as karren pinnacles, dolines, pits, caves, and shallow sinks. The most prominent of the solution is to be found in the Valle de Los Fantasmas, the western edge.of the area under discussion. The valley contains many 30-40 ft. pinnacles and shallow sinks. Since this entire area has received little attention in the past, this short paper has no intention of fully covering all aspects of the geology, but ratherto give a general idea of how past and present solution has affected pit development- particularly Sótano de Puerto de los Lobos.

The shallow valley that Mexico's highway 86 follows by San Francisco is, at least in the San Francisco area, the remnant of a drainage stream for the area, and on the eastern end of the stream course, it still serves as the outlet of streams coming from the mountains further east. Around San Francisco the stream has been pirated from its old course by Sotano de San Francisco which now diverts quite a large stream into its entrance. The pit drops 350 ft. to a lake of undetermined depth, no side passages going off, and could indicate some type of water level for the area or at least a trapped water pocket, since the only river of any size, Rio Verde, lies about 1,000 ft. below the town.

Most of the solution in the immediate San Francisco area is controlled by this stream-pit complex and probably is a more localized case for the whole area than a large controlling factor.

Actually Sótano de Puerto dE los Lobos is one ridge beyond the San Francisco drainage system and about 5^0-600 ft. higher than the entrance to S. de S.F. The controlling features for the sotano is in at least related to a small stream located l/4 mile from tho pit and 200 ft. lower in elevation than tho pit entrance^ however, it seems this stream is a newer addition to the area, evident from the shallow valley it has cut and has not made any noticeable modification on the pit, as such, except to rob it of some of its internal drainage. The whole S.F.-Sierra do Arboles area seems to possess quite a lot of external drainagE,and either most of those

Much internal drainage. Hopefully as we move south, with thicker limestone, there will be loss external and mere internal drainage*

Sótano de Puerto de los Lobos being the large fissure-pit it is, apparently either developed along a fault or joint and all, if any, break-down has been dissolved and removed from the now enlarged fissure. There is very little surface drainage and no arroyos of any size empty into the
pit. Very little breakdown is found at the bottom, and as just a small trickle of water flows across bottom, the cave has now lost its main water supply to the later surface stream or some lower system.

There is some indication in the pit of walls (sloughing) off and one side passage shows some secondary modification of the fissure, and possibly in tho past diverted quite a volume of water into the pit as this passage is quite large.

From the bottom a breakdown-filled fissure continues down below the present 650 level and would seem to give definite evidence the pit was at one time nothing more than a filled joint, now washed out by solution^ however, not enough geology was determined to find out the precise amount of solution now taking place in tho pit.

Some secondary fill has taken place with many large columns and stalactites. No formations are found in the lowest levels indicating the pit has at least in recent times developed very slowly, and tho fissure at the bottom has not been cleared of fill long enough for secondary deposits to be put down.

Apparently this joint system is quite localized, even to being a special cases, since no pits have boon found in -the immediate area of the sotano. The stories of all the great caves with very little reference to deep pits complicates tho story even further, but familartty with the locals has brought out information concerning sotanos further south, which could, when fully investigated, give a more detailed, if not, clearer picture, of pit development in this high promising karst area.

TRIP REPORTS

Discovery and Exploration of Sotano de Puerto de los Lobos

September 5,? 1968, a group of cavers, mainly from the SWTCC, located what proved to be the third deepest free-fall pit in the Western Hemisphere.
On this trip, which had as its main purpose the mapping of Cueva de Matehuula, were Martha Burk, Sharon Cathey, David and Velvet Jackson, Dwayne Faith, Ed Fomby, Jim McIntire, and Joe Sumbera. On September 4, we arrived in the Valle de los Fantasmas, a high karst area about 30 miles east of San Luis Potosí, intent on further checking out leads obtained by the Association for Mexican Cave Studies several years ago. The valley itself is literally pockmarked with karst features and shallow pits. The only pits of much consequence known in the area were Sotano de San Francisco, 350’ deep, and a 288' deep pit just north of the small town of San Francisco. We inquired of more sotanos with tho locals, however, nothing much was turned up except for one shallow sink. That night at camp, which was located about 1/2 mile south of San Francisco, we wore fortunate to most one of the locals who ap- peared to know tho location of numerous caves, not sotanos, farther south- southeast of town. Tho following day wo picked up the native and headed deeper into the area down a truck road, that is supposedly 58km. long. After several hours of windy mountain driving and fear of running out of gas, we stopped the truck and were shown Cueva de Sierra Blanca, a dry one room cave

hours from our main destination, Cave of the Virgin, which from all stories is the cave to see. On returning to camp, our guide pointed out that over in an area, not more than one mile from camp was a deep sot ano. Quickly scrambling out of the truck, we headed over to the sot ano, which was partially hidden by karren pinnacles and trees growing around the entrance sink,, The pit ‘was on elongated fissure 30’ x 15' and appeared to drop 150' to a sloping ledge and then immediately drop again. Rocks throw into the pit took from 14 to 18 seconds to stop bouncing off the pit walls and land on the bottom. (incidently, oven though froofall rocks when timed to find the pit depth are relatively accurate with certain constants applied, bouncing rocks and their' respective times have little relationship^ depending on pit size, rock size, and too many other variables for accurate estimates.) We estimated at that'time that the pit was over 500’ deep. Lacking the. necessary rope at this time, wo planned another trip for the next day , however, a torrential thunderstorm nearly finished our whole expedition. Deciding not to penetrate the entire pit, we rigged 45O[1] of goldline into toe pit, which Dwayne went down to the 250[1] level and reported that rocks from that level foil free for 6 seconds. Estimated depth was 700’.

The following weekend, Jim McIntire, Dwayne Faith, Bill Elliott, And J oe Sumbera returned to the pit with the intention of completely surveying the pit. On Sept. 13, Dwayne entered the pit for it's entire distance, and a wire was lowered into the sotono and measured. The total free fall distance was 620', under expectations, but still the third deepest drop in Mexico, and the fifteenth in the World. Joo rappelled in next to complete the depth survey with Dwayne. A bottom survey by Jim and Bill tho next dqy showed the cave to have a total depth of $50’ with 135’ of horizontal passage on the bottom to its end in mud and breakdown. Also, ajfauna collection was made, but all the results aren’t in yet. The pit keeps the entrance dimensions down to the 15O’ level where it hits the main fissure that is 100-175[1] x 40-60’. There is one small ledge at the 250’ level, but from there the pit drops sheer for over 300’. The pit was rigged with 7/16” Samson 2 in 1, which' proved quite satisfactory oven though over 4/5 the descent was against the wall. Average time for rappel was 15 minutes and prussiking time was just over an hour. The complete local name for tho pit is Sótano Hondo de Sierra de Arboles de Puerto de los Lobos.

Short Notes On Cueva de Matehuala

This cave is located 12 miles north of Matohuala and 130 miles south of Saltillo, and was found by Dwayne Faith, Bill Miller, Miles Abernathy, and Joe Sumbera in June of 1967. The immediate area is better known for its gypsum sinks and caves, but this cave has developed in a small limestone ridge that trends oast-west. Of particular interest was the amount of air blowing out of tho small 3’ in diameter sink ontarance. On this trip 1000’ of mostly dry walking passage was explored, and two deep fissure pits were left for later exploration.

'One year later, on Sept. 1-3, 1968, Jim Mcintire, Sharon Cathey, Martha Burk, Dwayne Faith, Joe sumbera, Ed Fomby, and David & Velvet Jackson visited the cueva. Three mapping trips wore made into the cave in two days. The pits were explored, one ended after 50[f], while the larger one proved to be 230’ deep and led to 50°* of walking and short drop passage to its end in a room 30’ in diameter and 20’ high. Total surveyed length was 1670’ and total depth was 545«3 feet. Damn I’m tired of typing. BP The cave is quite dry, rappells down the numerous shallow pits would stir up much dust and loose breakdown, however, the cave is interesting from the standpoint

did. Bat guano was found in the last room, probably indicating some other enterance that has now closed. The air circulation which is very noticeable at the enterance and in constrictions in upper passages is not noticeable in the lower levels. Also, it is not noticeable in the lower levels. Also, it was oblscrved that the air blowing out the enterance fluctuated with the wind outside, (increasing of Decreasing with increases of decreases in wind) Since no other onterances were located, we can only assume the cave acts like a great Helmholtz resonator or a largo jug. Oscillations in the air circulation would come as wind blowing over the enterance would cause air to suck out when blowing strong or no affect when not blowing. A complete analysis of the cave and it's air circulation as related to outside atmospheric conditions was not done on this last trip so all conclusions are purely theoretical.

Trip to West Texas

Toward the later part of this summer a trip was made to west Texas by Bill Elliott, Jim Sheppard, and Brian Peterson. Near Marathon, the group found a virgin 101' pit. Since I'm thoroughly tired of typing details will be supplied on request.

Progress Report On Inner Space

Bill Elliott, Brian Peterson, Wolfgang Lenhart, Howard Crow, and others dug approximately thirty feet of new passage this summer. Approximately 1,000 feet of passage was surveyed this summer. Water is down and has been all summer.

OFFICERS OF THE SWTCC

President- Bill Miller
Buckner Hall
Vice-President- Brian Peterson
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Secretary- Sharon Cathey
Falls Hall
Treasurer- Jim McIntire
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Equipment- Joe Sumbera
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PUBLICATIONS

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22180

11 The Texas Caver"
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79604

Association for Mexican Cave Studies
P.O. Box 7672
University Station
Austin, Texas
78712

Toxas Speleological Survey
Box 7672
University Station
Austin, Toxas
78712

POEM

People who write words on cave walls,
Roll bat guano into little balls.
People who read these words of whit,
Sat the little balls of bat guano.

(No rhyme just fact)

ABSTRACT

In reference to the aiticle that appeared in the August, 1968, NS.S Hews concerning the fallibility of Samson 2 in 1 rope, the conclusion reached can be summed up in several short words? Samson has the potential of failing under almost all cave conditions (considering the harshness and the cruelty of caves)? However, it was emphasised at the last NSS convention that Goldline has also been known to fail* Summing up, ropes of any caliber are dangerous in caves, but is that not what we go caving for in the first place?

Man of Steel

SUPPORT YOUR CLUB, PAY YOUR DUES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bird,
We understand and from reliable sources that your club is in need of several large New Testament Bibles (illustrated in color)* Enclosed you'll find the necessary literature*

Respectfully,
New England Bible Company
"Faith at Reduced Prices"

Dear Bird,
My son is interested in enrolling in SWT next year, and he hopes to join some type of organization* What types of benefits does your club have to offer?

Sincerely,
Protective Mother

Dear Protective Mother,
Nothing, we have enough panty-waists already.

As always,
Bird

Bird,
I'm a local rancher and have a small pit on my land* Would your club be interested in investigating it?

Hopefully,
Ira Hick

Dear I.H.,
Have no time for caving since I've joined the club. Will contact you after I graduate*

Dear Mr* Bira,
We understand that your club is operating an underground black market and has not reported it's sales or records to us, care to comment on it before investigation?

IRS

IRS,
Contact Brian Gilligan and Mike Walsh somewhere in Hays County*

Bird

Dear Birdy,
On club trips how are your girl cavers treated?

Female wanting to go underground

Cont. on next ra^e

Dear Female wanting to go under,

They[1] re treated with every courtesy that the situation will allow. Of course this leaves us much leeway.

With much glee, The Great
Horned Owl

CAVING IN MEXICO
Condensed from a recent AMCS publication)

For U. S. citizens to enter Mexico all that is necessary is proof of citizenship (birth certificate, voter's registration, passport, or notarized release) and car title. If the owner of the car is not present, a notarized authorization allowing the car to be taken into Mexico is needed, along with the title. A smallpox vaccination is no logner necessary to enter Mexico, or to return to the U.S. Mexican insurance is almost essential as most U.S. policies are not valid in Mexico and foreigners without insurence who are involved in accidents are frequently held in Mexico until all claims are settled.

Everything under the surface in Mexico, including oaves and minerals, belongs to the government. For this reason it is necessary to check with the local officals before visiting pits and caves not frequently visited. Permission is now prquired for all caves in the Cd. Valles, S,L.P. Area. Mexico is divided into municipies about the size of U.S. counties and the president or secretary of the municipio is the official to contact. Emphasize to the Mexican officals that cavers are interested in'caves mainly for their recreational value, and that you are not geologists, archaeologists, or hunters of minerals or treasures. The municipal authorities will write a letter giving permission to explore caves in the municipio and this should be shown when asking for information about caves. Do not disturb or remove any artifacts.

The cooperation of both officals and local inhabitants is necessary for a successful trip. To insure this cooperation it is important that all cavers respect the local customs and do not offend the residents. Try not to overpay for services, especially guides and pack animals. Guides should cost about 10-20 pesos a day and mules rent for 20 pesos. It is frequently difficult for people who have never encountered a caver to understand exactly what caving is all' about. In Mexico, the caver is usually a foreigner as well as a stranger, but courtesy and moderation in behavior will win friends anywhere.

Cavers affect caves as well as the people, and cavers have only reached the halfway point in conservation. ''Take nothing but pictures" is a uni^ versal feeling? however, its the other half that's missing. It is not that cavers in Mexico don't leave footprints— it's that they leafee everything else. It is time that the need for bringing out of the cave what was taken in is as universally recognized as the need for hardhats. The dumping of carbide is a crime against beauty.

Though the litter problem will not be solved' until everyone worries as much about what he brings out as what he takes in, most litter can be eliminated by advanced planning. Let's not turn the caves of Mexico into the World's deepest junkpiles.

RUMER HAS IT THAT SPECK HALL CONTAINS $1/2 \times 10^6$ MEXICAN FREE^TAIL BATS.
Judging from the stench of bat guano, I'd say this is conservative estimate.

THE GREAT FEATHERED ONE

THE 'OLD MAN OF STEEL'

Tel. 5429

THE $

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DISTRIBUTION OF CAVES IN TEXAS

(Taken mainly from the wisdom of A. Richard Smith and comrades)

Because of many factors much too detailed to enumerate in this article, it is possible to divide Texas into several spoloologic regions. There are a basic nine regions, neglecting isolated cases. It is the purpose of this work to familiarize you with Texas cave wise and give you a better idea as to where caves are or can be found. Details of one or more areas and/or caves can be obtained from the Man of Steel and/or others.

A. COMANCHE PLATEAU. Includes parts of Bosque, Burnet, Comanche, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampassas, and Mills counties. Caves occur in'the Edwards limestone, hero fairly thin and usually capping hills and divides. Diamond cave is the largest known.

B. BALCONES FAULT ZONE. Includes Bell, Williamson, Burnet, Travis, Hays, Comal, Bexar, Medina, Uvalde, Kinney, and Vai Verde. Caves are especially abundant along the Balcones Escarpment. Many large caves are known Including Inner Space Caverns, Cobb Caverns, Robber Baron[1]s, Indian Creek Cave, and Sally Cave. Major faulting with displacements up to 750' and associated jointing provide good ground-water conduits.

C. GUADALUPE-BLANCO AREA. Bexar, Blanco, Comal, Hays, and Kendall counties. Largo caves are found in the Glen Rose Formation. Many major caves are stream caves such as Honey Creek Cave, Spring Branch Cave, and Bartel's Cave. Other well-known caves are Cascade Caverns, Natural Bridge Oaverns, and Bracken Bat Cave.

D. LLANO REGION. Llano, Blanco, Burnet, Gillespie, Kimble, Lampasas, McCulloch, Mason, Menard, and San Saba counties.^ Many caves develop as large fissure systems in areas of intense jointing. The cavernous limestone units rigfe an interior core of igneous and metamorphic rocks which are cave barren. Caves are Longhorn Caverns, Buffalo Cave, Gorman Cave, and Mason Bat Cave.

E. EASTERN EDWARDS PLATEAU. Includes Bandera, Kerr, Real, Edwards, Gillespie, Kendall, Menard, Schleicher, and Sutton counties. All caves are in the Edwards Group. Many of the caves now have irregular plans, many collapsed rooms, and much bedding-plane development. Powell's -Cave (10 miles long now), Fleming Bat Cave, Station C Cave, Dragoo Cave, and Cave of the Lakes are well-known caves.

F. WESTERN EDWARDS PLATEAU. Includes Crockett, Terrell, Brewster, Edwards, Irion, Pecos, Reagan, Schleicher, Sutton, Upton, and Vai Verde counties. The area is typified by large branching caves and by multi-level maze caves. Large caves include Blackstone, Fern, Fawcett, and Caverns of Sonora. In addition there arc- a number of linear deep caves with long drops such as 0-9 Well, Langtry Lead Cave, and Emerald Sink.

G. BIG BEND. Brewster and Presidio counties. Caves are found in tho Santa Elena and Del Carmen Formations. There is little known about the caves of this area.

H. REEF MOUNTAINS. Glass Mts. in Brewster and Pecos counties, Delaware Apache, and Gradalupes in Culberson county, and the Sierra Diablo in Culberson and Hudspeth counties. These are composed of the Permian reef limestone. Windless, McAdoo Bat, and 400 Foot Caves are well-known. The outstanding caves in the Carlsbad Caverns area lend continued hope to cave hunting in these mountains.

I. GYPSUM PLAIN. Entirely in Culberson County. Most caves are less than 500 feet long, but quite varied in size and shape*

J. NORTHWEST TEXAS. Caves of Northwest Texas are formed in Permian gypsum. Most of the caves are merely underground routes used by stream floods from the upland areas to the river valleys. Best known are River Styx Cave, longest gypsum cave in Texas, Pothooks, Walkup, and Aspermont Bat Caves.

THE AESTHETIC CORNERg

The draftor delux of this now famous club has to offer to the general peon membership a most fantastic deal. CAVE MAPS Considering that I'm in competition with another club group, that illegitimate organization called The Man of Steel's and the Kid's Groovy Caving Corner, all prices have been sliced to most reasonable rates. Realizing that it will be hard to function on such low profit, I must sell in Bulk. The first person who orders 100 prints of Academy Cave will recieve one slightly used Whaletail Descender and several large, empty cans of FRUIT JUICE. Order now and recieve the leftover newsletters and censored jokes as a bonus.

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Fisher's Pit	11	$00.75
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Sótano de Puerto de los Lobos		$02.50

SPECIALS§

Life-size picture of the Man Of Steel (?)— make an offer

Special once only offer
Color photo of Brian and his sheep

Phone 245-5429 and ask for Joelsum Bera.